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THE SCHOOL REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

VOLUME XXVI

JANUARY 1918

NUMBER 1

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND MATHEMATICS AS REQUIREMENT FOR ADMISSION TO, AND GRADUATION FROM, AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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The purpose of this study is to determine the status in 1896 and in 1916 of the entrance and graduation requirements in foreign languages and mathematics in American colleges and universities. The data were secured by Mr. M. J. Wilcox, a graduate student in education, from an examination of the catalogues for 1896 and 1916 of thirty-five of our leading institutions of learning: Amherst College, Beloit College, University of California, Carleton College, University of Colorado, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, De Pauw University, University of Georgia, Harvard University, University of Illinois, Indiana University, University of Kansas, Leland Stanford Junior University, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, New York University, Oberlin College, Ohio State University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, University of Rochester, Tufts College, Tulane University, University of Virginia, University of Washington, Western Reserve University, Williams College, University of Wisconsin, and Yale University. It will be noticed that this list

does not include all of the institutions which might be properly included in such a list. The reason for this omission is that the catalogues of such institutions were not available for both dates. The list is, however, representative.

The status of entrance requirements in mathematics in 1896 and 1916 is shown in Table I. The requirements in both cases are for the A.B. course, but are also the minimum for any liberal-arts course. From this table we see that only one school in 1896 and one in 1916 had no entrance requirement in mathematics. There is, however, a decrease in the amount of mathematics required. In 1896 thirteen schools required at least algebra and plane and solid geometry, while in 1916 only four schools required more than algebra and plane geometry.

TABLE I
ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS IN MATHEMATICS FOR A.B.
COURSE IN 1896 AND 1916

Subjects Required	No. of Institutions	
	1896	1916
Algebra, plane, solid, and spherical geometry	2	1
Algebra, plane and solid geometry . .	13	3
Algebra and plane geometry	19	28
Algebra	0	1
Algebra or plane geometry	0	1
No requirement	1	1

Table II shows the entrance requirements in Latin and Greek for the A.B. course in 1896 and 1916.

It will be observed that the median requirement in Latin in 1896 was four years, and in 1916 none at all. For Greek the 1896 median was two years, and the 1916 median was none. In 1896 three schools had no specific requirement in Latin, and in 1916 twenty-seven had none. In 1896 twelve schools had no specific requirements in Greek, and in 1916 thirty-four had none. It is evident, therefore, that the entrance requirements in the ancient languages have been greatly decreased.

The entrance requirements in modern languages for the A.B. course have not been of great importance. In 1896 one modern language was required by five schools, and in 1916 by two schools.

TABLE II
ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS IN LATIN AND GREEK FOR A.B.
COURSE IN 1896 AND 1916

	1896	1916
Latin:		
5 years	6	0
4 "	19	6
3 "	7	2
None	3	27
Greek:		
3 years	14	1
2 "	9	0
Greek or Latin	0	5
Greek, none	12	34

Table III presents the number of years of foreign language (both ancient and modern) required for admission to the A.B. course in 1896 and 1916.

TABLE III
NUMBER OF YEARS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIRED
FOR ADMISSION TO A.B. COURSE IN 1896 AND 1916

	1896	1916
9 years	1	0
8 "	8	0
7 "	5	1
6 "	8	5
5 "	6	4
4 "	1	6
3 "	3	5
2 "	1	9
0 "	2	5

The median requirement in 1896 was six years of foreign language, and in 1916 three years of foreign language. In 1896 twenty-eight schools required more than four years of foreign language for entrance, and in 1916 only ten required more than four years.

Table IV shows the minimum requirements in foreign language for entrance into any liberal course.

TABLE IV
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR
ENTRANCE INTO ANY LIBERAL COURSE

	1896	1916
Greek, Latin, and one other.	3	0
Greek and Latin.	2	0
Greek or Latin and one other.	1	2
Greek or Latin.	1	0
Latin and two modern.	2	0
Latin and one other.	4	3
Latin.	4	0
Two foreign languages.	9	6
One foreign language.	6	18
No foreign language.	3	6

In all except three schools some foreign language was required for entrance into all courses in 1896, and in all except six schools some foreign language was required for entrance into all courses in 1916. In 1896 seventeen schools required an ancient language, while in 1916 only five required an ancient language for entrance into all courses.

Table V shows the requirements in mathematics for graduation from the A.B. course in 1896 and 1916.

TABLE V
NUMBER OF YEARS OF MATHEMATICS REQUIRED FOR
GRADUATION FROM A.B. COURSE IN
1896 AND 1916

	1896	1916
2 years.	9	2
1½ "	1	0
1 year	15	13
½ "	3	2
Amount not specified.	3	1
None.	4	17

These requirements are in addition to the minimum entrance requirements in mathematics. In 1896 ten schools required more than one year of college mathematics, and in 1916 only two schools

required more than one year. In 1896 four schools required no college mathematics, and in 1916 seventeen schools required none.

Table VI shows the requirements in foreign languages for graduation from the A.B. course in 1896 and 1916. The chief change shown in this table is the decline in the importance of Greek in the A.B. course. In 1896 it was required in twenty-two schools, and in 1916 in only one school. Latin has also declined somewhat in importance, although it still has an important place.

TABLE VI
REQUIREMENTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR GRADUATION FROM THE A.B. COURSE IN 1896 AND 1916

	1896	1916
Greek and two modern languages...	1	0
Greek and Latin and one other....	15	1
Greek and Latin.....	6	0
Greek or Latin and one other.....	2	9
Greek or Latin.....	0	1
Latin and two others.....	2	2
Latin and one other.....	0	2
Two foreign languages.....	0	4
One foreign language.....	7	13
No foreign language.....	2	3

Table VII shows the minimum requirements in foreign language for graduation in any course.

TABLE VII
MINIMUM FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION IN ANY LIBERAL COURSE

	1896	1916
7 years.....	1	0
6 ".....	0	0
5 ".....	4	0
4 ".....	8	2
3 ".....	5	4
2 ".....	11	20
1 year.....	3	5
0 ".....	3	4

Two years of foreign language now seems to be the prevailing requirement for graduation. In 1916 only six schools required

more than two years, while in 1896 eighteen schools required more than two years.

Table VIII shows the degrees and number of degrees offered by the institutions in 1896 and 1916.

TABLE VIII
TYPE AND NUMBER OF LIBERAL DEGREES OFFERED IN
1896 AND 1916

	1896	1916
A.B.	35	35
B.S.	20	17
Ph.B.	13	0
B.L.	9	1
Four degrees.	3	0
Three degrees.	15	1
Two degrees.	3	16
One degree.	14	18

The tendency has been to abolish the Ph.B. and B.L. degrees. There is only a slight decrease in the number of schools granting B.S. degrees, but in a number of catalogues the abandonment of this degree at some future time was announced. The difference between requirements of the various courses has largely disappeared with the lowered requirements in foreign and especially ancient languages.

Summary: The results of this study indicate a tendency toward granting one degree for all liberal studies and the elimination of specific requirements in mathematics and foreign languages both for entrance to, and graduation from, American colleges and universities.